

## Additional Information

### Tips For Observing and Photographing Dragonflies

Dragonflies can be loosely lumped into categories of “perchers” or “flyers”. Perchers, such as some of the skimmers, have a usual or favorite perch which they return to repeatedly. Some flyers have a usual route, a beat which they fly back and forth in the same area. You can pre-focus your camera or binoculars on that area to get a close look. Some have a large, long beat and are more difficult to predict, so some luck and persistence are required to find them perched. Most odonates are most active in the middle of the day, but some are more active early and late, roosting most of the day in the shade. Be prepared, research and study your subjects first to know the preferred habitats. Binoculars, especially close-focus binoculars are a great aid for observing all nature subjects.

Approach slowly, getting closer and snapping away as you go (with today’s digital cameras, you can always delete later). A good distant shot is better than none and will be of some aid in identifying later.

Try to align planes of focus; for example, a side view is usually good, so move to the side for a clear side view of the dragonfly. A “3/4 view” can show face and eyes as well as the side. Some field marks are more important than others in differentiating one species from another. Get more than one angle if possible.

Sun at your back is always good for photographic detail but be ready to use flash to “fill” in the detail on the shadow side if the subject is back-lit or in any dark situation.

### About ATBI

This brochure was compiled and developed by the All Taxa Biodiversity Inventory (ATBI) group. ATBI is an on-going project in Tennessee State Parks and State Natural Areas. The goal of ATBI is to document all species in Tennessee State Parks, monitor long-term trends in specific taxonomic groups, and promote education about and preservation of all biodiversity with increased science and citizen education efforts. To access the ATBI database, go to [www.tn.gov/environment/parks/atbi](http://www.tn.gov/environment/parks/atbi).

For more information about ATBI, please contact David Hill, 7th Floor, L & C Tower, 401 Church St., Nashville, TN 37243. Email [david.r.hill@tn.gov](mailto:david.r.hill@tn.gov). Phone 615-253-2455.

#### Dragonfly References

Beaton, Giff. 2007. Dragonflies and Damselflies of Georgia and the Southeast. A Wormsloe Foundation Nature Book.

Dunkle, Sidney. 2000. Dragonflies through Binoculars: A Field Guide to Dragonflies of North America. Oxford University Press.

Nikula, Blair et al. 2002. Stokes Beginner's Guide to Dragonflies. Little, Brown & Company.

<http://www.odonatacentral.org/>. Dragonfly Society of the Americas. This site has checklists of dragonflies by county.

*Collecting of plants or animals in state parks and natural areas is prohibited. Please help preserve Tennessee's natural heritage by leaving plants and animals for others to enjoy.*

#### REELFOOT LAKE STATE PARK

2595 State Route 21E

Tiptonville, TN 38079

Park Office: (731) 253-8003

Visitor Center: (731) 253-9652

[www.tn.gov/environment/parks/ReelfootLake/](http://www.tn.gov/environment/parks/ReelfootLake/)

TENNESSEE STATE PARKS  
DIVISION OF RESOURCE  
MANAGEMENT



*All Taxa Biodiversity Inventory (ATBI)*

## Dragonflies and Damselflies of Reelfoot Lake State Park and Lake & Obion Counties



Photo © Richard Connors

Welcome to the wonderful world of dragonflies at beautiful Reelfoot Lake State Park! Of the approximate 155 species of odonates (dragonflies and damselflies) in Tennessee 43 have been documented in this park and Lake & Obion Counties.

Above is a picture of a Widow Skimmer (*Libellula luctuosa*), male. A common "percher", widow skimmers are found near lakes, ponds and slow sections of streams. Both males and females have the solid black wing stripes next to the body. You can remember this one by: "the Widow wears black next to the body". The female has a dark brown abdomen with a bright yellow stripe down the sides.

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# Dragonfly and Damselfly Checklist of Reelfoot Lake State Park and Lake & Obion Counties

## **Damselflies (Zygoptera)**

### **Broad-winged Damselflies (Calopterygidae)**

O ☐ Ebony Jewelwing

### **Spreadwings (Lestidae)**

O ☐ Sweetflag Spreadwing

O ☐ Elegant Spreadwing

O ☐ Slender Spreadwing

### **Pond Damselflies (Coenagrionidae)**

O ☐ Blue-fronted Dancer

O ☐ Blue-tipped Dancer

\* ☐ Azure Bluet

\* ☐ Double-striped Bluet

O ☐ Familiar Bluet

O ☐ Stream Bluet

O ☐ Skimming Bluet

\*LO ☐ Orange Bluet

\*O ☐ Slender Bluet

\*O ☐ Vesper Bluet

\* ☐ Citrine Forktail

\*LO ☐ Fragile Forktail

O ☐ Eastern Forktail

L ☐ Duckweed Firetail

## **Dragonflies (Anisoptera)**

### **Darners (Aeshnidae)**

\* ☐ Shadow Darner

\*LO ☐ Common Green Darner

\*LO ☐ Swamp Darner

O ☐ Cyrano Darner

## **Clubtails (Gomphidae)**

\*O ☐ Bayou Clubtail

\*LO ☐ Jade Clubtail

L ☐ Unicorn Clubtail

O ☐ Flag-tailed Spinyleg

## **Cruisers (Macromiidae)**

O ☐ Royal River Cruiser

## **Emeralds (Corduliidae)**

O\* ☐ Prince Baskettail

## **Skimmers (Libellulidae)**

\*LO ☐ Common (Eastern) Pondhawk

\*LO ☐ Slaty Skimmer

\*O ☐ Widow Skimmer

O ☐ Twelve-spotted Skimmer

\*LO ☐ Great Blue Skimmer

O ☐ Halloween Pennant

\*LO ☐ Blue Dasher

\*O ☐ Wandering Glider

LO ☐ Spot-winged Glider

\*LO ☐ Eastern Amberwing

\*O ☐ Common Whitetail

LO ☐ Autumn Meadowhawk

O ☐ Carolina Saddlebags

\*O ☐ Black Saddlebags

O ☐ Red Saddlebags

\* **Documented in the Park**

\*L **Documented in Lake County**

\*O **Documented in Obion County**

## **Habitat:**

Reelfoot Lake is the largest natural lake in TN and was formed by the great earthquakes of 1811–1812. This shallow lake is lined with bald cypress trees and is intersected with sloughs and old creek channels. Much low swampy ground surrounds it. The sandy soil of this Mississippi River flood plain area washes and erodes easily. Without management otherwise, the lake will eventually fill in.

## **Good spots:**

\*Along the edge of the lake and in lake-side vegetation.

\*Open areas/fields and along the edges of these open areas/fields.

\*At streams and sloughs leading into the lake.

\*At ponds and marshy areas near the lake.

## **Notes:**

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